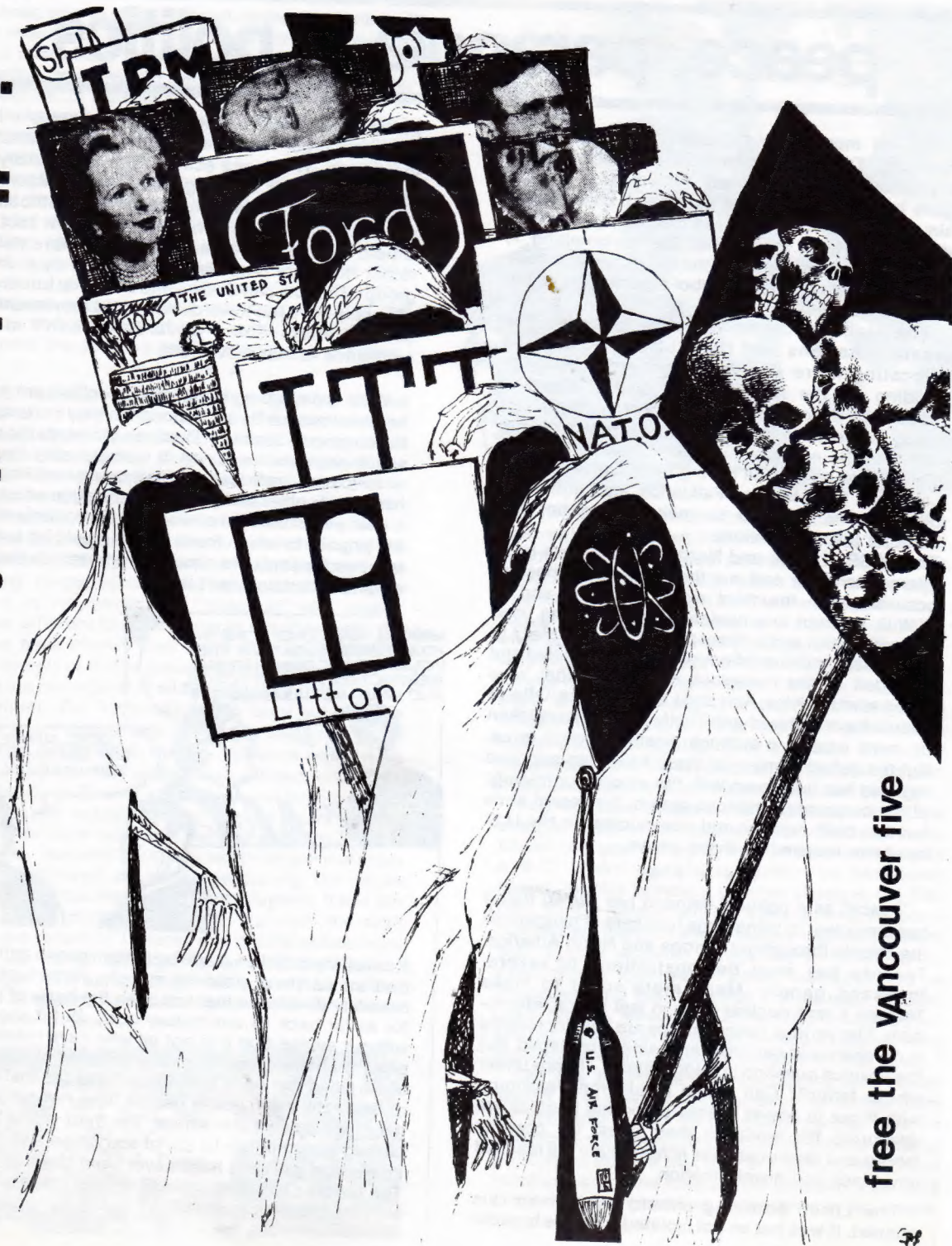


indirect action<sup>2</sup>

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free the vancouver five



# peace, paranoia & politics

Several months have passed since the Litton bombing. The response from the left and the peace movement has been varied. A number of people have been titillated by the daring act. Others have simply ignored it. Many have tried to put as much distance between themselves and the bombing. A few people understood that the attack spoke to their anger and rage. It was a symbol of resistance to the corporate state.

The global situation is indeed serious. The western nations and the multi-nationals are allocating more and more resources towards building up the military. With all the attention focused on the newest developments in the nuclear family, it is easy to forget that the biggest push is in fact with the non-nuclear forces. New tanks, new planes, new bombs, all having been battle tested in Lebanon, the Malvinas/Falklands and numerous other places, promise to make war dirtier and bloodier than ever before.

The USSR, Europe and North America have been spared the terror and war that have been constant occurrences in the third world since the end of W.W.II. Without any nuclear weapons being used and with direct and indirect participation by the U.S. and Russia, millions of people have been killed and wounded in the numerous small wars that have raged across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Often a people have suffered grievously as they have taken up arms against a technologically superior force. But the defeat of many of these American-supplied regimes has interfered with the smooth unfolding; of the corporate American dream: the recent arms buildup both nuclear and non-nuclear in the U.S. has been inspired by these losses.

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"Peace" as a political demand has shown that it has the power to bring large numbers of people into the streets throughout Europe and North America. Toronto has seen demonstrations of several thousand people. Many more voted to make Toronto a non-nuclear zone in last year's referendum. The various peace groups are ever increasing in numbers and new ones are being established. But the obvious question is seldom asked, "Peace under whose terms?" Can peace result from reasoning with those in power, whose corporate buddies are devouring the world in their quest for cheaper labour and resources. War is not simply the result of ignorance and disinformation.

The Litton bombing should be seen in this context. It was not an act isolated from the broader

peace movement. The individuals who acted in the name of Direct Action were not merely frustrated individuals. They were acting quite consciously to open up another front against the War Machine. This strategy need not undercut the methods of principled pacifists. The more militant tactics should make a non-violent movement more visible rather than less credible. If one action by a small group of people can destroy the work that hundreds of people have put towards building a movement for several years, there obviously wasn't much substance to that movement.

What is disturbing is that many pacifists are much harsher towards Direct Action than they are towards the corporate dealers in Death and towards the state which protects the racket. It is completely beyond us as to how professed pacifists could even imagine handing another activist over to the state which has a near perfect record of violence particularly within the prisons to which these people would be sent. At least such people are clear as to whose side they are on and it certainly isn't ours.



A corollary criticism made by certain peace activists is that an us/them polarity merely perpetuates the hatred and violence that has been the basis of politics for as far back as our history goes. But it should go without saying that it is not us who have created this polarity. Rather it is through a process of seeking to understand the world that allows us to see that women do not rape men; native people have not perpetrated genocide against the whites; the third world has not caused our children to die of starvation and disease. Power and privilege have never been given up lightly. The practise of moral witness will not influence those without apparent morality.



The peace movement in North America has so far not been able to stop one death or the positioning of one missile, in spite of all our efforts in pursuing legal channels. Patience would be a virtue if the situation were not so serious and the danger so immediate. In the relative comfort and "security" of North America, self-preservation has not become a motivating factor in developing a broadly-based anti-militarism.

Peace is not only the absence of war. It means the end of starvation and everyday oppression. It means the end of devastation of the natural world. It requires the destruction of social structures in which the few end up with power and privilege while the many are attacked by poverty, patriarchy, ecological poisoning and the destruction of the variety and richness of local cultures which have nurtured the people's spirit for many generations.

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It is necessary to stop the testing of the Cruise missile in Canada. But if this alone were accomplished, we would not be one step closer to an authentic peace. The movement against the Cruise will reveal/has revealed the reality of the repressive state behind the politicians. There has been debate within the movement as to whether or not the cops were excessive in their handling of the November 11th protesters, which illustrates the varying perceptions of the role of the state and police in refereeing this "dialogue" with power. These differences have come to the fore since the police have shown their hand through raids and harassment of active groups and individuals.

We are not critical of all elements within the peace movement. But we would like to point out that the issue is not simply one of determining one's moral position on guerrilla tactics. Violence will always remain a possibility and as such will be tried sooner or later. Even Ghandi's campaign was accompanied by a large movement of armed resistance. Churches were burned in the women's struggle for the vote. Recently \$100,000 worth of raw materials were destroyed by sabotage during the strike against Canada Metal on Eastern Avenue. It was the East Indian communities that "banned" the Klan from the streets of Toronto, and not the police. How long do we go on fighting for piecemeal policy changes and using "legitimate" forms of protest when all around us are examples of effective, direct response to concrete threats?



The five Vancouver individuals pictured above have been held for over two months in Burnaby's Oakalla prison for their alleged participation in guerrilla actions claimed by Direct Action and the Wimmin's Fire Brigade. On March 1st they were denied bail though none of them have any previous criminal charges of any consequence. All are well-established members of the community with extensive support of families and friends. Pledges of eight houses and eighty thousand dollars were offered had the court demanded such guarantees. But it was a no go. Guilty or innocent, these five people will have suffered more for their politics than most of us ever will by the time the trial begins.

The five have pleaded their innocence to all the charges. Each is charged with between twelve and fifteen charges, including the dynamite bombing of a B.C. Hydro electric substation on Vancouver Island; the fire bombing of three stores in the Red Hot Video chain which specializes in porn videotapes, many of which feature explicitly violent acts against women; conspiracy to bomb an oil exploration icebreaker under construction in Vancouver and the Canadian Forces base at Cold Lake, Alberta, where the Cruise Missile is slated for testing; possession of restricted firearms and explosives; and conspiracy to rob a Brinks truck.

The way the media has handled the case raises doubts as to whether they can obtain a fair trial even by the state's own terms. Many people here in Toronto, both amongst the activists and the general population assume that they are guilty of the Litton bombing since the connection between them and Litton has been made so many times in the media.



But Metro police have not been able to come up with enough evidence to lay charges against them here.

In Vancouver, the press coverage has overwhelmingly been based on police sources and suspect investigations by the reporters. Nightly news broadcasts carefully developed personal profiles of them conforming to preconceptions of them as 'terrorists.' One enterprising CBC reporter rummaged through the household garbage where four of the accused had been living in order to come up with a unique story angle. His finds included personal poetry which was subsequently read on the air. They've been constantly referred to as 'extremists'; articles have linked them to unsolved robberies. The front page picture which appeared across the country showed a large arsenal of weapons which the police alleged to belong to them but nothing to substantiate this claim has been offered at all. Similarly, numerous reports about a stash of dynamite have appeared but again, no specific evidence has linked these five people to the stash. The media has also not seen fit to print a communique from the Wimmin's Fire Brigade stating that the five in custody are not members of WFB.)

If the police thought that it would be an easy go to railroad these people into lengthy prison sentences, they have been surprised by the level of support shown for them. These are not five isolated individuals. They are all respected for their efforts in a variety of community efforts and political struggles. These include Native issues, prisoner solidarity work, the women's community, the punk community, third world support work and many others. At a rally held in front of the Vancouver courthouse before one of the bail hearings, Lee Lakeman of Rape Relief expressed the feeling of many people when she said that "these people are exactly like us. They have stood with us before to protect the aboriginal people, to condemn sexist violence and to howl for peace. We demand their immediate release."

The best way in which to support the five is to increase our efforts in learning about the real nature of power in this society and to develop ways in which to become more effective in our resistance. The Five have no wish to be made martyrs. They will continue working on the issues that concern them from within the walls. Already the prison administration has singled them out for harassment. It is up to us to turn the situation around to address the issues which are touched upon by this case, including the struggles within the prisons. As Ann put it in one of her letters, "People should be angry, not because we are in jail, but because the military-industrial complex is still moving forward, virtually unchecked, with their life-destroying projects."

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One doesn't have to support armed struggle to defend these people. One assumes that political activists accept the legal definition that suspects are presumed innocent until proven guilty. It is a human rights issue. Minimal demands are — the right to bail, and the right to a fair trial. However, it is clear that whatever the guilt or innocence of these five that the state has made the right to be politically active the deeper issue in the case. As the raids here have shown, anyone who is active in opposition to the way things are is suspect by the state. Four homes were raided in Vancouver after a meeting to co-ordinate the support campaign. If activists assume that their refusal to defend these activists will protect them from retribution, they should realize that they are merely setting the precedent for no one supporting them if their turn should come.

In defending these five activists we challenge the state's right to lock anyone up. More crime is created within the prison system than is ever negated through its punishment. We challenge the peace activists to work towards freeing all political prisoners if they do not wish to see these five singled out, and more concretely, to work against the building of a new local detention centre.

#### WHY WE SHOULD SUPPORT THE FIVE

They desire for an end to the Patriarchy. They stand against Ageism, Racism and Sexism. They stand against Nuclear Power, Weapons & War. They stand for the Right of Women to take control over their bodies. They are opposed to the Raping of the Earth for Corporate and State Profit under the guise of Progress. They stand for the Right of all native Aboriginal Peoples to exercise control over their destiny.

They desire an end to the system which dominates, degrades, and exploits all people on a daily basis in the name of profit. They stand for People before Profits!

In short they seek nothing less than the true expression of Freedom for all the Earth's People everywhere without the fear of any form of Tyranny.

So Long As There Is A Spirit in Prison, WE ARE NOT FREE!!

information & support

RALLY

MAY 2, 1983

trojan horse

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7:30  
pm